

Majorities of All Faiths Support Aid in Dying

Majorities of Californians of every faith – including Roman Catholics - believe in permitting terminally ill patients to make their own choices about the final days of a terminal disease.

For believers, their deaths involve a very private conversation with their Creator. Government is not welcome in the discussion. Nor should government impose one faith's belief on all.

Polls Show Strong Support for End of Life Choices

A March 2006 Field Poll found strong support for end of life choices among Roman Catholics (64%), Protestants (65%), and even Born-Again Christians (54%). Eighty percent (80%) of those of other faiths, or who subscribe to no single faith, support end of life choices.

California Catholics are clear on the concept. When asked if a terminally ill adult should be able to ask for and get life-ending medication, they overwhelmingly support choice.

Diverse Group of Clergy Support Compassionate Choices

A long list of clergymen and women, representing a diverse cross-section of American religious faiths, including a Jesuit Catholic scholar, have united to support the California Compassionate Choices Act. Religious leaders from different faiths support aid in dying out of a common sense of compassion for people suffering at the end of their lives.



Rabbi Joshua Stampfer, who led the oldest Conservative Judaism congregation on the west coast for 40 years, said his counseling of dying patients has convinced him that those patients have the right to choose to end their suffering.

“Most people will cling to hope until their last breath. Some decide differently. What is most important is for people to know they have a choice, and to enable them to make the best end-of-life decisions for themselves.”



Reverend Dr. Ignacio Castuera, of St. John's United Methodist Church in Watts, argues that aid in dying is not counter to religious morality. “People of different faiths and beliefs agree that life is sacred and should be respected and preserved as long as humanly

possible. However, when death is imminent, it is entirely respectful to the sanctity of life to allow a person to decide for himself or herself when and how they can ease their pain and suffering in a dignified manner.”



“The core principle for Catholic theology should be the intent of the patient and caregivers when all hope is gone, when suffering is unbearable to that dying patient and stringent safeguards protect against any error or coercion.”

Daniel C. Maguire, Professor of Moral Theological Ethics at Marquette University, a Jesuit Catholic institution.



United Church of Christ, Northern California-Nevada Conference, Endorses Aid in Dying

“Our faith in God does not require us to prolong people's needless suffering,” says **Rev. John Brooke** of the United Church of Christ.

“I believe dying people should have choice. With [aid in dying], everyone will have a fuller range of protected, end-of-life choices. Californians want choices.”